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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for building a page in response to a request from a user, the method comprising:
  - receiving a request from a user;
  - dynamically composing a page in response to the request; and
  - making the page available to the user.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of dynamically composing a page comprises:
  - identifying a set of candidate components for the page, each candidate component having a nominal value; and
  - selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components, wherein the selection is based on increasing an actual page value of the page, the actual page value is a function of the actual values of the page components, and the actual value of each page component is a function of the nominal value of the page component and of an effectiveness of the page component on the page.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of dynamically composing a page comprises:
  - identifying a set of candidate components for the page, each candidate component having a nominal value; and
  - selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components, wherein the selection is based on increasing an actual page value of the page, the actual page value is a function of the actual value of the page components, the actual value of each page component is a function of the nominal value of the page component and of an effectiveness of the page component on the page, and all of the actual values of the page components are in a same unit of measure.

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4. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of receiving a request from a user comprises receiving the request via a browser.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the page components include content, links and ads.
6. The method of claim 3 wherein:
  - the actual page value equals a sum of the actual values of the page components on the page; and
  - the actual value of each page component equals the nominal value of the page component multiplied by the effectiveness of the page component on the page.
7. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
  - for at least some of the candidate components, determining the nominal value of the candidate component, wherein the nominal value is a function of the request.
8. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
  - for at least one of the candidate components that is an ad, determining a nominal value of the ad partially as a function of a revenue generated by placement of the ad on the page.
9. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
  - for at least some of the candidate components, determining a nominal value of the candidate component as a function of a relevancy of the candidate component to the request.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein:
  - the request was generated by a requesting page; and
  - the step of determining a nominal value of the candidate component as a function of a relevancy of the candidate component to the request comprises determining a

nominal value of the candidate component as a function of a relevancy of the candidate component to the requesting page.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein at least one of the candidate components is content.
12. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of determining a nominal value of the candidate component comprises:  
determining a nominal value of at least one candidate component also as a function of a relevance of the candidate component to a demographic profile of the user.
13. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of determining a nominal value of the candidate component comprises:  
determining a nominal value of at least one candidate component also as a function of a geographic location of the user.
14. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of determining a nominal value of the candidate component comprises:  
determining a nominal value of at least one candidate component also as a function of a relevance of the candidate component to a behavioral profile of the user.
15. The method of claim 9 wherein:  
at least one candidate component has multiple versions; and  
the step of determining a nominal value of the candidate component comprises  
determining a nominal value of the candidate component also as a function of the version.
16. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
tracking user follow-through on the page; and  
for at least some of the page components, updating the nominal value of the page component in response to the tracking.

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17. The method of claim 16 where the step of tracking user follow-through on the page comprises:

tracking link follow-through on the page.

18. The method of claim 3 wherein the effectiveness of a page component is a function of a placement of the page component on the page.

19. The method of claim 3 wherein the effectiveness of a page component is a function of the other page components on the page.

20. The method of claim 3 wherein:

the step of identifying a set of candidate components for the page comprises identifying

page components used in a default composition of the page; and

the step of selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as

page components comprises selectively eliminating candidate components based

on increasing an actual page value of the page.

21. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components comprises:

for at least one page component, selecting a version of the page component.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the step of selecting a version of the page component is a function of an available bandwidth for the user.

23. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of dynamically composing a page in response to the request comprises:

using a static composition for a portion of the page; and

dynamically composing a remainder of the page in response to the request.

24. The method of claim 1 wherein the request identifies a specific page.

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25. The method of claim 1 wherein the request comprises a search request.
26. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of making the page available to the user comprises:
  - transmitting the page to the user.
27. The method of claim 1 wherein:
  - the step of receiving a request from a user comprises receiving a request from the user via the Internet;
  - the step of dynamically composing a page in response to the request comprises dynamically composing a web page in response to the request; and
  - the step of making the page available to the user comprises transmitting the web page to the user via the Internet.
28. A method for building a database of components for use in building pages in response to requests from users, the method comprising:
  - receiving information describing components;
  - registering the components in a database of components to reflect the received information;
  - receiving a request from a user;
  - identifying a set of candidate components from the database of components, each candidate component having a nominal value;
  - selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components, wherein the selection is based on increasing an actual page value of the page, the actual page value is a function of the actual values of the page components, and the actual value of each page component is a function of the nominal value of the page component and of an effectiveness of the page component on the page; and
  - making the page available to the user.

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29. The method of claim 28 wherein:
  - the step of receiving a request from a user comprises receiving a request from a web server on behalf of a browser operated by the user; and
  - the step of making the page available to the user comprises identifying the page components to the web server for composition of the page.
30. The method of claim 28 wherein:
  - for at least some of the components, the received information comprises a category for classifying the component; and
  - the step of identifying a set of candidate components from the database of components comprises identifying at least one of the candidate components based at least in part on the category.
31. The method of claim 28 wherein:
  - for at least some of the components, the received information comprises different versions of the component; and
  - the step of selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components comprises selecting specific versions for at least one of the page components.
32. The method of claim 31 wherein the received information further comprises bandwidth ratings for the different versions.
33. The method of claim 28 wherein for at least some of the components, the received information comprises relevant date information for the component.
34. The method of claim 28 wherein:
  - for at least some of the components, the received information comprises target demographics for the component; and

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a nominal value for at least one of the page components is a function of a match between the target demographics and a demographic profile of the user.

35. The method of claim 28 wherein:

for at least some of the components, the received information comprises subject matter descriptors for the component; and

the step of identifying a set of candidate components from the database of components comprises identifying at least one of the candidate components based at least in part on the subject matter descriptors.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the subject matter descriptors comprise keywords.

37. The method of claim 28 wherein for at least some of the components, the received information is in a format based on a predefined template.

38. The method of claim 28 wherein for at least some of the components, the received information is received via a predefined API interface.

39. The method of claim 28 wherein the step of receiving information describing components comprises:

crawling through a network of pages; and

generating information describing the components within the pages.

40. A computer system for building a page in response to a request from a user, the system comprising:

a runtime database containing runtime information concerning components that can be used to compose pages; and

a runtime server coupled to the runtime database for receiving a request from a user, accessing the runtime database to dynamically compose a page in response to the request; and making the page available to the user.

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41. The system of claim 40 wherein the runtime server is further for:
  - identifying a set of candidate components for the page, each candidate component having a nominal value; and
  - selecting a subset of the candidate components for placement on the page as page components, wherein the selection is based on increasing an actual page value of the page, the actual page value is a function of the actual values of the page components, the actual value of each page component is a function of the nominal value of the page component and of an effectiveness of the page component on the page, and all of the actual values of the page components are in a same unit of measure.
42. The system of claim 41 wherein the runtime server is further for:
  - calculating the actual page value as a sum of the actual values of the page components on the page; and
  - calculating the actual value of each page component as the nominal value of the page component multiplied by the effectiveness of the page component on the page.
43. The system of claim 41 further comprising:
  - a relevancy engine coupled to the runtime server, for determining a nominal value of at least some of the candidate components as a function of a relevancy of the candidate component to the request.
44. The system of claim 41 further comprising:
  - a profiling engine coupled to the runtime server, for determining a nominal value of at least one candidate component as a function of a relevance of the candidate component to a demographic profile of the user.

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45. The system of claim 41 further comprising:  
a profiling engine coupled to the runtime server, for determining a nominal value of at least one candidate component as a function of a relevance of the candidate component to a behavioral profile of the user.
46. The system of claim 41 further comprising:  
a link tracking system coupled to the runtime server for tracking link follow-through on the page, wherein the runtime server is further for updating the nominal value of at least some of the page component in response to the tracking.
47. The system of claim 41 wherein the effectiveness of a page component is a function of the other page components on the page.
48. The system of claim 40 further comprising:  
a management server coupled to the runtime server and adapted to receive information describing the components;  
wherein the management server and the runtime server are further for registering the components.
49. The system of claim 48 wherein the management server is further for pushing changes to component registration to the runtime server.